

Watson Park
Community Meeting
Wednesday, November 2nd, 2005
Empire Gardens Elementary School
Meeting Notesⁱ

Website to download report, obtain information (bottom right on webpage):

www.sanjoseca.gov/prns *In attendance: available upon request*

Introductions

Vice Mayor Cindy Chavez thanked the 65+ attendees for attending the update meeting regarding Watson Park and explained that the meeting's purpose was to introduce the consulting group working on the project, explain the timeline, provide an update regarding health screening opportunities, and answer questions that the community may have.

Albert Balagso, Assistant Director of Parks, Recreation, and Neighborhood Services, provided a recap of past meetings and an overview of the situation regarding Watson Park. Albert announced that since the last meeting, the City of San Jose has set aside \$2 Million in reserve funds to be used towards Watson Park soil remediation and site improvements. This is in addition to the \$800,000 set aside for the soil characterization study, and the \$347,000 restored towards funding for the future Watson Park skate park. The City has also held meetings with elected representatives at state and federal levels to explain the Watson Park situation and begin a formal request for financial assistance if necessary.

Frank Barnard, a Capital Project Advisory Committee (CPAC) member and a community member on the committee to select the soil consultant, spoke about the CPAC meetings and asked the CPAC members to identify them-selves by standing. Frank then explained the process used to select the consultant and that the goal of the CPAC was to serve as an advisory group for the city and an action group that can help move Watson Park towards reuse as quickly as possible.

Ty Williams and Karen Fuqua, representing San Jose Unified School District, reiterated the SJUSD position that the indications noted from their tests show Empire Gardens School as a safe site. The school site playground would continue to be accessible to the public during non school hours.

Glen Rock introduced Suzie Vedantham of URS Corporation. URS Corporation provided an overview of their background and credentials, and explained their plan for full site characterization and process for making recommendations for remediation as well as a timeline for site characterization and remediation.

Charis Subil, Public Health Manager for the Santa Clara County Department of Public Health, provided an update on the community health education and blood testing for the community. The County of Santa Clara will offer two free presentations and clinics regarding lead exposure. Both sessions will be held at Empire Gardens School Cafeteria on Thursday, November 17th from 6:30 – 8:30 PM and on Saturday, November 19th from 10:00 AM to Noon. Individuals with questions can contact the County Public Health Department at 408.494.7820.

Questions and comments were then taken from the audience. Three questions were asked and answered:

Q: The remediation plan is targeted for completion in the Spring of 2007 and implementation of that plan complete by Fall of 2007. Is 6 – 9 months adequate for implementation? Is that the norm?

A: The schedule as the City has it is the best estimate based on the information now known. The complete testing and the final site characterization will help determine a final schedule. URS Corp stated that it was good to go through a park planning process and that most sites such as this do not have the ability or can complete a site planning process. Doing so will help determine the best and most cost effective way to remediate the site.

Q: It was suggested that the next CPAC meeting have an agenda item that focuses on the creation of a master budget so that the CPAC members can see what the City of San Jose can realistically be able to do and spend on the park site. The Master budget may help provide a framework for park planning.

A: The first phase of planning will involve what works where. The City of San Jose will try to run a characterization and park planning process concurrently. The City can also look at park planning projects of similar size and examine costs for similar projects with regard to park planning and reprogramming of the site.

Q: Is implementation done all at once or can it be done in phases?

A: It can be completed in phases. Completing the master plan for the site concurrently will enable this and speed up the remediation and reuse of the park.

ⁱ These meeting notes are meant to be a reflection of the community meeting held and the discussions that took place during the meeting. In some cases, information brought up at the meeting may be subjective and/ or requiring validation. Please refer to Questions and Answers and Fact Sheets on this topic, or contact a staff person listed above to help answer any questions you may have.